




State of Utah  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

Michael O. Leavitt  
Governor  
Kathleen Clarke  
Executive Director  
Lowell P. Braxton  
Division Director

1594 West North Temple, Suite 1210  
PO Box 145801  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5801  
801-538-5340  
801-359-3940 (Fax)  
801-538-7223 (TDD)

May 7, 2002

TO: Minerals File  
FROM: Paul Baker, Reclamation Biologist   
RE: Site Inspection, Molycorp, Small Fry Project, M/037/022, San Juan County, Utah

Date of Inspection: May 1, 2002  
Time of Inspection: About 12:00 PM  
Conditions: Mostly clear, windy, 50's  
Participants: Gary Haptonstall and another person with Harding ESE (Reclamation Contractor),  
Doug Jensen and Paul Baker, DOGM

**Purpose of Inspection:**

The operator has notified the Division that it intends to begin reclamation work this year, and we wanted to become familiar with the site. Although I had left a message notifying the operator's representative that we planned to visit the site, it was fortuitous that the reclamation contractor was there.

**Getting to the site:**

Take the road going south from SR 46 toward the Lisbon and Big Indian Valleys. This road is about three miles west of LaSal and seven miles east of US 163. About five miles south of SR 46, just before the Big Indian Mine and just before the road splits with one side going to Lisbon Valley and the other to Big Indian Valley, there is a road that heads southwest. This road is across the street from Bill Harrison's home (Monoclinic Mine). Following this road about a mile, there is a road that heads off to the left. Take this road for a few hundred yards and there is another road that goes right and leads to the mine. Although these directions may seem complicated, the site is not terribly difficult to find even by just wandering around a little as we did.

**Observations:**

This is an underground mine with two portals at the base of a cliff. The road enters from the north, goes by one of the portals, then forms a loop up toward the other portal and down to a pad. Photo 1 shows the lower pad in the background and the area near the upper portal by the power company workers. All that we could see of the lower portal was some timbers.

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There were two fuel tanks on the lower pad, one on skids and the other on a stand. There was a trackhoe on the lower pad and a small dozer on top of the cliff above the upper portal (the place from which Photo 1 was taken). As can be seen from Photo 1, the power poles were being removed while we were there. There was little or no other debris or equipment.

Most of the slopes had well established stands of rabbitbrush, but the waste piles were poorly vegetated (Photo 2). The pads had little or no vegetation.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations:**

We discussed some general reclamation concepts with the contractor. It should be possible to push a certain amount of fill into the portals using the trackhoe. As far as possible, the vegetation on the slopes should be retained as much as possible while grading the site.

Mr. Jensen and I emphasized the importance of leaving the site extremely rough. Gouge marks that are about one to two feet deep hold moisture, reduce erosion and offsite sedimentation, and increase vegetation establishment and growth.

The contractor indicated he thinks it will take about five weeks to complete the project. The operator should notify the Division one or two weeks before grading work is complete so the Division can arrange another site visit and determine whether the work has been adequate before the equipment has been removed.

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Attachment: Photographs

cc: Alan Randall, Molycorp

Brent Northrup, BLM, Moab

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# ATTACHMENT

Photographs  
M/037/022  
Small Fry Mine



Photo 1. Utah Power and Light personnel removing power poles with trackhoe and fuel tanks in the background.



Photo 2. Slopes between the upper and lower roads.